

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 215847

PARIS FOR USOECD,BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

FOLLOWING REPEAT GENEVA 07618 ACTION SECSTATE INFO NATO
DATED SEP 07:

QTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 7618

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: CSCE, SENV, NATO, ECE
SUBJ: ECE WESTERN CAUCUS DISCUSSION ON ENVIRONMENT MEETING SEPT 5,
1977

REF: STATE 208943

SUMMARY: AT SEPTEMBER 5 ECE WESTERN CAUCUS MEETING, NORWAY
PUSHED FOR ECE SENIOR ADVISERS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS
TO ESTABLISH EXPERT GROUPS TO CONDUCT ANALYSIS OF TOPICS
PROPOSED FOR POSSIBLE HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON ENVIRONMENT.
END SUMMARY.

1. ECE WESTERN CAUCUS MET SEPTEMBER 5 AT WORKING LEVEL TO
HOLD PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ON SENIOR ADVISERS ON ENVIRONMENTAL
PROBLEMS (SAEP) MEETING SEPT 19-21. NORWEGIAN REP
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(GRAHAM), WHO CHAIRED MEETING, URGED THAT SAEP MEETING SHOULD
ESTABLISH TASK FORCES TO CONSIDER THE SUITABILITY OF TOPICS
FOR POSSIBLE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON ENVIRONMENT
FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF RESOLUTION XXXII(1) CRITERIA.
NORWEGIANS SAID THAT THIS WAS THE VIEW OF THE ECE SECRETARIAT
ON HOW TO PROCEED AND THAT THEY ALSO SHARED IT. GRAHAM
SUGGESTED THAT INSTEAD OF THE TERM"TASK FORCES"

WE COULD CALL THE GROUPS "EXPERT ANALYSIS GROUPS" OR USE ANOTHER NAME THAT DOES NOT IMPLY AS MUCH COMMITMENT TO A FIXED OBJECTIVE AS THE WORD TASK FORCES.

2. UK, US, BELGIUM AND SWITZERLAND ALL URGED PROCEEDING WITH CAUTION AND NOT RUSHING TO O QUICKLY INTO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCES. BELGIANS ASKED HOW THE TASK FORCES WOULD OPERATE, WITH WHAT DOCUMENTS, AND EXPERTS? UK SUGGESTED THAT SECRETARIAT MAY WANT TO DIGEST RESULTS OF SEPTEMBER MEETING AND THEN COME BACK. SWISS WARNED THAT BEFORE TASK FORCES CAN BE ESTABLISHED THERE MUST BE SOME CONSENSUS AND ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THERE WERE NONE. WE NOTED THAT TASK FORCES ARE ONE WAY TO HANDLE PROBLEM, BUT THERE MIGHT BE OTHERS AND, IF TASK FORCES ARE ESTABLISHED, THEY SHOULD ALL WORK IN SIMILAR WAY.

3. GRAHAM REPLIED THAT STANOVNIK MUST PREPARE HIS REPORT BY MID-DECEMBER AND CONSULTATION PROCESS MUST BE COMPLETED BY THEN. TASK FORCES OR EXPERT GROUP NECESSARY BECAUSE EXPERTS FROM GOVERNMENTS MUST REVIEW TOPICS SINCE SECRETARIAT DOES NOT HAVE MANPOWER TO CONDUCT THIS TYPE OF TECHNICAL ANALYSIS. HE AND FRENCH REP NOTED THAT STANOVNIK DOES NOT NEED A CONSENSUS SINCE IT IS FORM HIM TO GATHER ALL OF THE VIEWS AND THEN COME UP WITH A REPORT. NORWEGIANS ALSO STRESSED THAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN PROCEDURAL EXERCISE AND THAT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE MAKE AS CLEAR AND PRECISE AN CONFIDENTIAL

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ANALYSIS AS POSSIBLE OF THE DIFFERENT TOPICS IN ORDER THAT THE SOVIETS CANNOT ACCUSE US LATER OF NOT HAVING ACTED IN GOOD FAITH AND IN CONFORMITY WITH RESOLUTION XXXII(1). GRAHAM REPEATED THIS THEME SEVERAL TIMES DURING MEETING.

4. THERE WAS VERY LITTLE DISCUSSION ON POSSIBLE AGENDA TOPICS AS MOST REPS OBSERVED THEIR CAPITALS HAD NOT FOCUSED ON MATTER SINCE VACATION PERIOD. WE NOTED THAT OUR POSITION IS STILL AS EXPRESSED IN OUR LETTER, BUT THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER OTHER TOPICS PROPOSED IN LIGHT OF CRITERIA IN RESOLUTION XXXII(1). IN RESPONSE, GRAHAM OBSERVED RUSSIANS HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT WESTERN COUNTRIES WERE NEGATIVE ON HAVING MORE THAN ONE TOPIC CONSIDERED BY HIGH-LEVEL MEETING. GRAHAM ALSO NOTED THAT, IN ADDITION TO TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION WHICH ALMOST ALL COUNTRIES HAVE MENTIONED, THE EASTERN COUNTRIES HAVE ALSO TENDED TO STRESS LOW AND NON-WASTE TECHNOLOGY AND SECONDLY MARINE POLLUTION AS POSSIBLE TOPICS.

5. QUESTION OF WHETHER TO CALL ANOTHER WESTERN CAUCUS MEETING BEFORE SAEP LEFT OPEN. A NUMBER OF DELEGATES SAID THAT AT SAEP MEETING THEY WILL BE REPRESENTED BY

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AS WELL AS ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALISTS.

6. COMMENT. IT IS CLEAR THAT SECRETARIAT AND NORWEGIAN PREFERRED OUTCOME FROM SAEP MEETING IS TO HAVE TASK FORCES OR EQUIVALENT ESTABLISHED FOR EACH PROPOSED TOPIC TO CONSIDER IT IN DETAIL SO AS TO PERMIT JUDGMENT WHETHER IT MEETS AGREED CRITERIA. WE WOULD APPRECIATE WASHINGTON VIEWS ON THIS. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS SOME HESITATION EXPRESSED AT MEETING ABOUT ESTABLISHING TASK FORCES, NO ONE SPOKE OUT IN OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION TO THEM AND NO ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF PROCEEDING WERE PROPOSED, ALTHOUGH WE NOTED ONE EXPERT GROUP TO CONSIDER ALL PROPOSALS WAS AT LEAST HYPOTHETICAL POSSIBILITY. VANDEN VHEUVEL
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